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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 001639

SIPDIS

STATE FOR DRL/MLGA, DRL/PHD, EAP/CM, AND EUR/ERA

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: CHINA: HU JIA RECEIVES THE EU'S SAKHAROV HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE

Classified By: POL M-C CHRIS DAVIS FOR REASONS 1.4 B & G

¶1. (C) Summary: In a move sure to anger China, the European Parliament (EP) voted to award its annual Sakharov Human Rights Prize to prominent Chinese activist Hu Jia on October

¶23. Commission sources report they have been besieged by Chinese demarches calling on them to distance the Commission publicly from the EP's award, a move that would be impossible for the Commission to make. The prize will be awarded in Strasbourg on December 17, two weeks after the EU-China summit in Lyon, scheduled for December 1. In an apparent move designed to appease China, France will, according to one Commission source, arrange that the Dalai Lama not attend a planned gathering of Nobel Peace Prize winners designed to draw attention to the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On October 23, the European Parliament voted to award the 2008 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Chinese dissident Hu Jia. The prize ceremony will take place in Strasbourg on December 17, two weeks after the EU-China summit to be held in Lyon on December 1. Hu Jia is being recognized by the EP as a prominent political activist in China, who has embraced a wide range of causes, including environmental issues, HIV/AIDS advocacy, and full disclosure regarding the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. In November 2007, Hu Jia spoke to a public meeting of the European Parliament's Human Rights subcommittee via telephone from house arrest. As a result of that dialogue, he was charged with "inciting subversion of statepower" and was sentenced in April 2008 to three-and-a-half years in jail. The Sakharov Prize is awarded to individuals or organizations who have made an important contribution to the fight for human rights or democracy. To mark the 20th anniversary of the prize, a special event for all previous prize-winners will be held in Strasbourg on December 16. The Sakharov Prize winner receives EUR 50,000.

¶3. (C) Commission sources say that they expect China to "react badly" to the European Parliament's vote, which has been anticipated in Brussels for weeks. In the past week, China has reportedly summoned the Head of the European Commission's Delegation in Beijing twice, and has demarched at various levels in the European Commission repeatedly in recent days. Even third country counterparts in Brussels have noted the large numbers of Chinese diplomats conspicuously present at the European Parliament in recent weeks. China has been pressing the Commission to issue a statement distancing itself from the EP's award, a move the Commission could not realistically make.

¶4. (C) One Commission source also reports that, in honor of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights this fall, the French Presidency will host a gathering in Paris of all previous Nobel Peace Prize winners. According to this source, to appease China, France reportedly seeks some accommodation with the Dalai Lama; he will be invited, but will regret the invitation. We will attempt to verify the veracity of this assertion.

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